

COOKING FOR ONE

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BY

MARJORIE BARON RUSSELL



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TORONTO

Dedicated to
AUBREY CLARK
who gave me the idea

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCING THE AUTHOR AND MR. CLARK

WHEN the War was still raging in Europe, and black-out came down soon after sunset, there was really very little to talk about that gave one real satisfaction but Food—and especially “What I Should Like to Eat Now”. In the middle of an entrancing conversation with an old friend about what we had most enjoyed for dinner six years ago, the first faint pre-natal stirrings of this book took place. The talk branched off towards breakfast, and the right way to cook bacon.

“My difficulty,” said Aubrey, “is that there are no cookery books—or none that I can find—that tell you how to boil eggs, how to make tea and coffee, how to boil potatoes, and so on.”

“Surely,” I said, “everybody knows those simple things by nature.”

“They don’t,” Aubrey protested, “at least I don’t. I have had to work by trial and error. Why don’t you write a book for bachelors?”

So this book was first thought of, and soon after it began to come into being.

It will be of no interest to those who know how to cook already. There are not many new recipes in it, although there are some. But it does tell you how to set about getting ready a meal for one—and sometimes even for two or more, if you are feeling hospitable—if you live alone, and there is no professed cook on the premises.

Because there will be men and women, even now that the War in Europe is over, who will have to get meals ready for themselves, and who have had no training in cookery or in catering, it seems worth while to begin with a description of

the equipment they will need, and some account of the foods they should buy in small quantities (because they are better eaten fresh), and those that can be bought and stored. Also it seems worth while to tell these solitary eaters what foods they will do well to eat every day, if they want to keep in good health. I know that many books and articles have been written on this subject, but it is not so easy as all that to find out from any one of them just what are the daily requirements of a normal human being who wants to keep healthy, without being obliged to eat a great many things he doesn't like, and to leave out a good many things that he dotes upon. The daily requirements given here can apply to everybody, and I hope they are varied enough for anyone to follow without tears.

VITAMIN REQUIREMENTS

Every day—one pint of milk, either with tea or coffee or soup, as a drink, or in some sort of sauce or pudding—household milk can supply the deficiency when fresh milk is not available, so can diluted condensed milk.

One ounce of cheese—or make a point of eating the whole of your weekly cheese ration.

One orange or one tomato, or a good helping of raw green salad or watercress for breakfast.

One ounce of butter or vitaminised margarine.

One egg, fresh or dried.

Once a week—fat fish of some kind, fresh or tinned. It may be salmon, herring, sprats, sardines, pilchard, mackerel, tunny or kipper or bloater.

OTHER FOOD REQUIREMENTS

Include in one of your daily meals a good helping of either meat, fish, cheese or eggs (dried eggs are equal in food value to fresh eggs even if they do not taste so good.

There are one or two hints in the book on what to do with them).

Eat a green vegetable once a day, or, if you can't bear greens, eat more salad, tomatoes, watercress, or raw carrot, or concentrate on fresh fruit whenever you can get it, especially black-currants, oranges and lemons and grapefruit, as soon as they come back on to the market.

Eat wholemeal, or brown bread sometimes, or eat oatmeal porridge for breakfast.

Eat liver now and again. If you don't like it, or if you can't bear fat fish either, I am afraid you should take a capsule of cod liver or halibut liver oil once a day.

If you keep some of these rules in mind, and follow them most of the time, you can eat and drink what you like in addition provided, of course, you don't mind what happens to your figure.

Having taken the last item on the list first, let us now consider the first item, i.e. *KITCHEN EQUIPMENT*.

This sounds formidable, but I have taken care to include here the minimum number of necessities. Probably you have them all, but if you are setting up your kitchen, be sure to include:

- 2 saucepans, 1 large, 1 small
- 1 frying-pan, heavy quality, not tin, with a flat bottom
- 1 iron spoon
- 1 kitchen knife
- 1 strainer (for coffee and to use as a sifter sometimes)
- 1 colander
- 3 forks and 3 spoons—dessert spoon size
- 1 wooden spoon
- 6 teaspoons
- 1 chopping board
- 1 small knife, for scraping and peeling vegetables

- 1 vegetable grater
- a corkscrew
- a tin opener
- a stiff brush for scrubbing vegetables
- an egg slice, or fish slice.

Many things can be added to this equipment, if you begin to take an interest in cooking for its own sake. One or two basins, for example—a large mixing bowl, for making pastry, or cakes or puddings, a pastry board and a rolling pin, a flour sifter and a wire sieve. But none of these is absolutely necessary; the list above is for cooking for one. It is taken for granted that you have either a gas cooking stove or an electric cooker, and temperatures for both are given in this book. The stove will probably include some other useful accessories—a grill pan, a metal tray for the oven for example. One or two steel baking sheets are useful if you have them or can get them. So is a small egg beater, or whisk.

You will notice that scales are not included in the list. If you have no scales—and they are hard to get, just now—you will be obliged to measure in spoons and cups. We have no standard measuring spoons and cups here, as they have in America, and spoons and cups vary a good deal in size. Dessert spoons seem to vary less than the others, so I have measured all your ingredients in these. The liquid measures have been taken in a tea-cup, which should hold a gill or a quarter of a pint. It is a good plan to keep one spoon and one cup for measuring purposes—mark them both in some way, and then you will soon find what amounts to allow in your recipes.

FOODS TO BUY FRESH—IN SMALL QUANTITIES

Green vegetables, salads, fresh fruits—day by day; butter and cheese once a week. Margarine keeps well, but you will

probably buy it once a week with your other rations at present. Milk—every day. Meat—as you want it, especially if you have not a refrigerator. Fish—also as you want it. Eggs—not more than six at a time, even after they are in good supply. Fresh herbs—parsley, mint, chives, tarragon and chervil—day by day.

FOODS TO BUY IN QUANTITY FOR STORING

Dried fruits—prunes, figs, apricots and apple rings—
1 lb. at a time.

Sugar—3 lbs. at a time, when it goes off the ration.

Flour—7 lbs. at a time, if you have a tin box to store it in—if not, 1 lb. at a time.

Salt—3 packets at a time.

Pepper— $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. at a time.

Mustard—a tin or a glass of French mustard at a time.

Spices—cinnamon, nutmegs, mace, ginger, mixed spice
1 oz. of each.

Vinegar—1 bottle.

Rice, semolina, sago and tapioca—1 lb. at a time.

Macaroni—1 lb. at a time.

Jam or marmalade—a jar of each.

Try to accumulate a few stone jars for storing, they are tidier in the kitchen than foods stored in bags. Glass jam jars will store rice, and the other cereals, sugar, peppercorns and spices. Don't pour hot fat into a glass jar, it will break it. Use stone jars for dripping.

May I also say here what I would say to you if we were cooking together in your kitchen or mine, although you may think it a little dictatorial. Get all your materials ready before you begin to cook—lay out your chopping board, set your knives and forks beside it, get out your measuring spoon and cup, decide upon your recipe and then measure out all your

ingredients. Chop what needs chopping, have your salt and pepper handy, light your oven if you are going to bake, and then you will find that you can go ahead easily and smoothly—and you will find yourself much less tired at the end of your cooking operations than if you had had to scurry about the kitchen all the time, looking in this cupboard and that for odd ingredients, dropping one thing to take up another, and forgetting to light the oven until your dish was ready to go into it. Also, clear up as you go along. Your kitchen is probably small; it will be much easier to work in it if you wash up each plate and basin as soon as you have finished using it and put it away. If you pile everything into the sink to be washed up along with the dinner things you will hold yourself up, because your supply of utensils is not unlimited, and you may want some saucepan, spoon or dish that is waiting to be washed up. These rules may sound very elementary—forgive me, I mean well.

NOTE

I hope that this book will be found useful when all foods are easy to buy once more. For that reason, I have included throughout some things that are not to be had just now, or that are hard to get—rice, for example, and oranges, and lemons, fresh fruits and vegetables, prunes, milk, and even wines and liqueurs. In time I hope we may be able to use them all again; they make a more cheerful business of cookery.

CHAPTER TWO

BREAKFAST FOR ONE

BREAKFAST can be of infinite variety, like Cleopatra. Plain breakfast (not like Cleopatra) shall be dealt with first—tea, coffee, toast and marmalade.

TEA.—There is no greater fallacy than that which states that it does not matter how you make tea so long as it is nice and strong. There is a right way to make tea, let me be dictatorial again and tell you about it.

Fill your kettle with fresh, cold water, empty out any water that has been standing in the kettle all night to do so. Bring the water to the boil, and, when it is hot, pour a little into your tea-pot, rinse it out when the pot feels hot, and put in, for one, a heaped teaspoonful of tea—or two teaspoonfuls if you want to drink three or four cups. *The moment the kettle comes to the boil* fill your warmed tea-pot with boiling water, cover it, and stand it aside in a warm place for three minutes. If you make your tea with water that has been boiling away for two or three minutes, or if you make it with stale water that has been boiled before, your tea will not taste fresh and aromatic, as it should. A tea cosy is a good thing to have—it keeps your tea hot while you are eating.

COFFEE.—You may have observed that there was no coffee percolator or coffee-making machine among your kitchen equipment. You can use any machine you have, of course for making coffee, but when this book was written such machines were unobtainable, so it seemed a good plan to behave as though they did not exist. They are in no way necessary for the making of good coffee, which may be made like this:

Fill your kettle with fresh water and bring it to the boil. Warm a jug, or a tea-pot, or any receptacle, with hot water and put in *at least* two heaped dessertspoonfuls of coffee. (Tastes vary, I use $2\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons myself—or five dessertspoonfuls.) When the water boils, pour into the jug four teacupfuls of boiling water, stir, put a lid or a plate over the jug and stand it in a warm place for five minutes. Strain into your cup, and if you are a precisian, pour in boiling milk with the other hand (you will find this difficult) and add sugar if you like it. A little less than $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of milk is a moderate allowance for breakfast—half your daily allowance.

COCOA.—I expect there are people who like to drink cocoa for breakfast. They will find directions for making it on the tin. If they take my advice they will use milk instead of water, and double the amount of sugar—and of cocoa too, for that matter.

TOAST.—Have the grill red-hot before you begin to make toast. Don't forget your toast in the heat of other preparations. If you do allow it to become black on one side, you can save the slice by scraping the black off with the blade of a knife. The knife, however, will remain black, so don't try to cut the butter with it. An American girl I know puts her toast back under the grill after she has buttered it and frizzles the butter. She calls this French Toast, and seems to like it. So may you.

And now for the English Breakfast.

BACON.—There are two ways, at least, of cooking breakfast bacon: grilling and frying. To grill: make your grill red-hot first, and cook the bacon in the grill pan. It grills very quickly, so, unless you like it very well done, you need to

watch it all the time. This is a good method, but it has two disadvantages. One, you probably have only one grill pan for making toast and for grilling bacon—this can be overcome by making your toast first and grilling your bacon afterwards. Two, you deprive yourself of the bacon fat in which you may wish to cook an egg, or eggs. You can, in this event, grill your bacon on the days when you feel like eating a boiled egg, or, having grilled your bacon, you can pour the fat into a frying-pan and use it for frying eggs, bread or left-over potatoes. Allow yourself two rashers of bacon, and one or two eggs, with a slice of fried bread sometimes, and some fried potatoes if you have any to use up. Cut the potatoes in slices, and make the fat smoking hot before you put them in. Bacon fat tastes good, so there is no need to drain them after frying—as you would have to do if they were cooked in hot lard or dripping. Fry bread also in smoking fat, lift after a minute or two to see if it is brown underneath. When it is, turn it and brown the second side.

EGGS.—The important thing to remember about eggs is that they do not profit by great heat, which makes the white part hard and a little difficult to digest. So, when you fry eggs, turn down the heat, and take the pan off the heat just before they look cooked. The hot pan will finish the cooking. This rule applies not only to fried eggs but also to scrambled eggs, which shall be described in more detail presently. It is a good plan to break the egg first into a cup, then to slide it into the hot fat. How long you cook it depends on your own taste. If you like it only just set, keep it mobile by sliding a round-bladed knife underneath it while it is cooking, and lift it out with a fish slice as soon as the white is set. If you prefer it cooked on both sides, keep it moving, and, when the white is set on one side, turn it over with the fish slice and cook the

other side. Practice makes perfect in egg moving. If you break one or two of your own eggs, it does not matter.

SCRAMBLED.—This is a rather more skilled job. Break the eggs into a breakfast cup and beat them with a fork until they run easily from the fork. Add half saltspoonful of salt and a pinch of pepper. Make the fat hot—bacon fat, butter or margarine. As soon as it begins to smoke pour in the eggs, and move them away from the edges of the pan with a knife. Very soon, they will begin to set all over in large flakes—as soon as they do so, move the pan off the heat and beat in a spot or two of butter or margarine. They will finish their cooking as you do this. The moment they are set, scrape them on to a hot plate. They should be creamy, not hard and curdled. Keep the heat low all the time they are cooking—it is much easier to overcook than to undercook scrambled eggs. When you have more practice you may prefer to cook them in a saucepan. They take longer to cook, but the result is often more satisfactory.

POACHED.—Here you need a frying-pan half-full of boiling water, salted, with a teaspoonful of vinegar in it. Break the egg into a cup, and, when the water boils, slip in the egg. Cook for $2\frac{1}{2}$ minutes, turning down the heat after one minute, then lift out the egg with a fish slice, drain on a cloth, and put on to a piece of toast. Myself, I think poached eggs are more trouble than they are worth. They are apt to spread themselves in the water, when they have to be brought back to reason with a spoon, and they often acquire a ragged look that is not appetising. There are several ways to make life easier for an egg poacher; one, buy a complete set of cake cutters, if you can, and use one of the larger cutters, laid in the panful of boiling water, to poach your egg in. Two, buy a

patent egg-poacher, and use that. Three (recommended), butter a cup or a saucer inside, and break your egg into ~~that~~ it. Set the utensil in water in the frying-pan and cook the egg inside it. This takes a little longer, but it is easy, and you can eat your egg out of the cup, or saucer. This is, in fact, a recipe for Poached Egg Off Toast.

BAKED EGGS, OR EGGS AND BACON are, in my opinion, nicer to eat, and they are certainly easier to cook. Rub a buttery paper over a saucer and break the egg into it. Put it into a hot oven (Regulo Mark 7 or 425-450°) for ten minutes; when the white is set, sprinkle a little salt and pepper and a few chopped herbs over it and eat it, out of the saucer. This is what French cooks call *Oeuf sur le Plat*—when I was a convent child, a huge dish used to be brought in at lunch time, sizzling hot, of twenty or thirty eggs cooked in butter in a big fire-proof dish. Eaten with fried potatoes, I know of few better dishes for lunch or breakfast. I can still see Mère Sainte Basile crossing herself casually with one hand and wielding a spoon while she muttered grace and fed her flock. To go back to our breakfast eggs, this may sound an extravagant way to cook them from the fuel stand-point, but if your life is at all like mine, there are days when you have to be extravagant or go without a cooked breakfast, and if such a day occurs, you can always cook some bacon at the same time as the eggs and kill several birds with one stone. For this, you need an enamel plate, or a small fire-proof dish (which can be got at Woolworth's). Put your bacon on this, or in it, break your egg over it, and cook in the oven while you make your toast and coffee or tea. This is a labour-saving way to cook bacon and eggs, but it is a good one, unlike most labour-saving methods in cookery. If you like bacon and eggs for lunch or supper, this is an excellent way to cook them.

Warning—don't get carried away by your toasting or coffee-making and forget the oven. Bacon and eggs take 10 minutes in a really hot oven (Regulo Mark 7 or 450°F.) or 15-20 minutes in a cooler oven (Regulo Mark 5-6, or 350-400°F.) The time may vary a little; fireproof dishes take a little time to heat through, and keep food hotter in consequence while it is being eaten. Cooking on an enamel plate may well take less time. You can experiment for yourself.

DRIED EGGS will, I hope, not be with us very much longer. While they persist I cannot conscientiously advise any bachelor to eat them for breakfast. If you must, however, you must, and there are a few things that you can do to them that will help to disguise their dried-egg flavour:

- (a) Mix them properly, that is to say, be sure to beat out all the lumps before you "reconstitute" them. If you cannot do this successfully, press them through your gravy strainer before you begin to mix.
- (b) Add half the water required for reconstituting, then beat well with a fork. Add the rest of the water, a pinch of dry mustard, and beat again. This does help a little to improve the taste.
- (c) Scrambled Dried Eggs can be made to taste tolerable (I would not like to go further than that) if you chop and fry a little onion in your hot fat before you put in the eggs, and if you sprinkle the mixture well with chopped herbs after it is cooked.
- (d) Try reconstituting with milk instead of water.

KIPPERS may be grilled, fried or poached in water.

TO GRILL.—Make the grill red-hot. Put the kipper in the grill pan skin-side down and grill three minutes. Turn, and grill three minutes on the other side. Put a small piece

of butter (or margarine) on top before you eat it. You can cook for five minutes on each side if you like your kipper very well done.

TO FRY.—Put the kipper in a frying-pan and cook it over moderate heat, if you like it underdone, or over strong heat, if you like it crisp. Time: about five minutes. Ivor Montagu, who is an authority on kipper-cooking, once told me that the ear is the organ to consult in this matter. "When they are done," Ivor said, "kippers stop hissing and spit."

TO POACH.—Put the kipper in a frying-pan and cover it with cold water. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer for three minutes. Drain on a cloth before serving. Add a small piece of butter (or margarine) to the top of the kipper while it is still hot. Pepper it well, and eat with bread and butter or buttered toast.

BLOATERS can be cooked whole, treated like kippers for grilling, or for frying. Or they can be split, the back-bone removed, then grilled or fried. Or they can be fried in hot fat—preferably dripping—in which event they should first be rolled in flour or oatmeal. Leave them whole for this kind of frying, and be sure that the fat is smoking hot before you put them in, or they will taste greasy. Drain them on crumpled paper before putting them on your plate. Obviously, a dish for Sunday breakfast.

SMOKED HADDOCK.—Put in a frying-pan and cover with equal parts of milk and water. Bring to the boil, and simmer gently for about five minutes.

Simmering means cooking with the liquid bubbling on one side of the pan only—when it bubbles all over, that is boiling.

Keep the heat low. When the fish separates easily from the bone it is done. The exact time depends on the thickness of the fish. Lift it out of the pan with a fish-slice and drain over the pan for a minute or two before putting on a hot plate. Put a bit of butter (or margarine) on top, pepper well, eat with bread and butter.

SAUSAGES.—Speaking just now of Sunday breakfast reminded me that I have said nothing so far about sausages—a traditional Sunday breakfast dish in my family, if not in yours. My first breakfast on American soil was Grilled Link Sausages, Hot Cakes, with Butter and Maple Syrup. Very good it was too. I confess that at that time, being unaccustomed to American ways, I ate the sausages (which in England we should have called Chipolatas) with one hot cake, and saved the maple syrup for the second cake. They should have been eaten all together, and were, by my fellow passengers on the train, who were amused by my cautious method, and said so. This is a digression, and I apologise. Sausages for breakfast can be cooked in the oven, fried or grilled. All ways are good, but they give rather different results. If you like your sausages well cooked, and don't mind the skins being a little hard, grill them. When they are brown, they are done. If you like your sausages to burst, and cook brown on the outside while they are soft and juicy within, fry them. Use strong heat, and turn them about while they fry. They take five to ten minutes, according to taste. If you like them brown, juicy and unb^urst, cook them in a fairly hot oven (Regulo Mark 6-7, or 400-450°F.) for half to three-quarters of an hour.

PORRIDGE.—Easy way to eat porridge is to get pre-cooked oatmeal in a packet and cook according to directions.

For strict Scots, who must have the real thing, a labour-saving way is to put the oatmeal in soak overnight—two dessert-spoonsful of oatmeal stirred in half a pint of cold water for one. In the morning, stir well, put into a double sauce-pan, if you have one, if you have not, put into a small pan, and put the pan into a larger one half-full of boiling water, but first bring the contents of the small pan to the boil, stirring all the time or the porridge will be lumpy. When it boils, put the small pan inside the larger one and leave it while you prepare the rest of your breakfast, for which I allow you fifteen minutes. By that time your porridge will be cooked, and, as a Scot, you will of course put salt on it and eat it standing up.

That covers most of the things that you are likely to want to eat for breakfast (whatever the Ministry of Food may think), but I am thinking of my solitary feeders, and I would like to advise them now and again to eat a little fruit for breakfast. A raw apple is good, a baked apple perhaps better. Soaked prunes are easy to prepare, and very very good for you—but don't let that deter you. You are advised to get all these ready overnight.

BAKED APPLES

Wipe the apple with a clean towel and put it into a pie dish. Bake until soft in a moderate oven (Regulo Mark 6 or 350°F.). The time for cooking depends on the apple—some cook much more quickly than others. About 30 minutes is an average time. If you want to be chic, take out the core with your vegetable knife, put some sugar in the space left, and pour a little water in the pie dish. A small knob of margarine on top of the apple helps. Sliced apples can also be fried with bacon and are very good.

SOAKED PRUNES

Put half a pound of prunes in a colander and wash them well under the hot-water tap. Put them in a bowl, pour over enough boiling water to cover them, and put a plate over the bowl. In the morning, you will find that the prunes are soft enough to eat without cooking, and they taste fresh and good. No sugar is needed. A handful of sultanas, washed and soaked with the prunes, give extra sweetness, if you have a sweet tooth. Very good for the constipated, and containing an appreciable amount of Vitamin B. Soaked prunes can also be fried with bacon, so can slices of peeled vegetable marrow. Some people have told me that marrow cooked like this tastes like mushrooms, but I don't believe them. However, it is very good, and doesn't taste like marrow.

Stewed fruit will be dealt with in the Lunch chapter; it is recommended for breakfast, for vitamin and other reasons.

CHAPTER THREE

LUNCH OR SUPPER FOR ONE

PROBABLY you will lunch out most of the time, but now and again, at week-ends perhaps, you may want to cook yourself some simple dish, or you may sometimes like supper at home after a theatre, a film or a concert. So, in this chapter, let us deal with a few simple recipes for a one-course meal, leaving the preparation of meat, and the making of puddings to the chapter that deals with the chief meal of the day. Egg salads and vegetables will provide the materials for some good dishes that are not difficult to cook.

But first, I should like to say something about the use of fresh herbs in cookery, and this is a good place to say it, for it is with egg dishes and salads that fresh herbs really come in their own. Parsley, mint, tarragon, chervil and chives are the most grown, and apart from parsley and mint, even these are not too easy to find in the neighbourhood shops. With perseverance, however, you can achieve most things, and once you have become an addict, you will look forward eagerly as I do to the months when fresh herbs are in season. Then, your kitchen will be fragrant with chopped mint and parsley, even if you cannot lay hands on the sharp-flavoured tarragon, the delicate chervil, the aromatic basil—so good with tomatoes in their cooked or uncooked state—the onion flavoured chives that give so delicate a taste to soups in summer, and the summer savory that should always accompany a dish of broad beans. Scattered over any egg dish, a salad, over all dishes of mashed potatoes, on grilled chops and steaks, these homely flavours transform the simplest dish into something that a cook can be proud of; they have made me a cook's reputation, for once you begin to interest yourself

cooking enough to choose the right herbs for flavour in your dishes, you are on the road to being a good cook. Bear with me, then, if I harp on the subject of herbs in the rest of this chapter. Note: Keep your herbs in a small jar full of fresh water, and change the water frequently.

EGG DISHES AND SALADS

Baked, poached, and scrambled eggs have been dealt with in the breakfast chapter. Here are the directions for making an omelet of a simple easy kind—let us call it Everybody's Omelet—it is really more like scrambled eggs with bacon.

EVERYBODY'S OMELET—FOR ONE

2 eggs

1 dessertspoonful of chopped herbs

—parsley and mint, etc.

1 rasher of bacon.

very little salt and a little pepper.

Cut off the rind and the rust from the bacon—the rust is the discoloured skin on the inside of the rasher, that is, on the side opposite to the rind—and cut it in small pieces. Beat the egg until it runs easily from the fork, add some pepper and very little salt—the bacon will give a salt flavour to the omelet—and put the eggs aside. Chop a sprig or two of parsley, by picking off the thick part of the stalk, bunching the leaves in the left hand and cutting them across finely with a kitchen knife. Then take the point of the knife in the left hand, hold it down on to the board and chop across and across the leaves until they are fairly finely divided. Put the bacon in the frying-pan and fry it brown, then pour in the eggs, reduce the heat, and cook the eggs until they begin to set, moving them away from the edge of the pan and stirring them gently with a fork. The moment the eggs are set, slide them on to a hot plate with

a round-bladed knife, sprinkle with parsley and eat at once. If you try to keep an omelet hot it turns tough.

This is hardly the place to go into the ins and outs of omelet making, which is a fairly skilled operation, and may be left to practised cooks. Many cookery books will give you directions for making and cooking omelets, so there is no need to repeat them here.

EGG SALAD

This is a good and satisfying dish, and gives me an excuse to tell you about salad dressings, a necessary thing for you to know, for salads without dressing are not likely to charm you much. You need:

- 1 or 2 eggs, hard-boiled
- a lettuce
- a tomato, or quarter of a cucumber
- salad dressing—chopped herbs.

Put on a kettle full of water and bring it to the boil. When the water boils, pour some of it, enough to cover the eggs, into a small saucepan, put in the eggs, bring the water to the boil again, then reduce the heat so that it keeps the water just boiling and cook the eggs for 15 minutes. Drain off the boiling water, refill the saucepan with cold water and leave the eggs in it to cool. While your eggs are cooking and cooling, prepare your salad and make your salad dressing. Wash the lettuce thoroughly under the cold tap, shake some of the water from the leaves, throw away any withered, yellow leaves, but keep some of the green outside leaves—they are good in a salad. Put all the lettuce you intend to use in a clean tea-towel and whirl it round your head, as if you were a cricketer getting ready to throw a ball. The water will fly off in all directions, so do this in the bath-room, where it does not matter if things get wet. This constitutes drying the

salad, and should always be done before you put on the dressing. If you dress a salad without drying it first, the leaves wilt, and drink up too much of the dressing, so that the salad does not taste as it should. A perfect salad is crisp, dry, and coated with dressing but not soaked in it. Cut your tomato, or cucumber in slices and put them on top of the salad, and sprinkle all over with chopped herbs after the dressing has been put on and the salad well tossed with a knife and fork. The eggs may be sliced and added to the salad, or eaten whole, just as you like. For the salad dressing you need:

2 saltspoonfuls of salt

1 saltspoonful of freshly ground black pepper

$\frac{1}{2}$ small teaspoonful of French mustard

2 dessertspoonfuls of vinegar

6 dessertspoonfuls of salad oil, medicinal paraffin, or milk from the top of the bottle, a clove of garlic, chopped in very small pieces and a teaspoonful of sugar can be added, if you appreciate garlic, and if you like your dressing sweet. Both are recommended.

Put the garlic first into a cup, add salt, pepper, mustard and sugar then stir all with the vinegar until the sugar and salt are melted and mixed with the vinegar. Then add the salad oil, and beat the dressing well with a fork until the mixture is emulsified. If you use milk, beat that in. It is a good plan to put the dressing into the refrigerator for a while, so I recommend making it first.

This dressing is so good made with top milk that I have met many people who prefer it to a dressing made with salad oil—I do so myself, and I have eaten it at least once a day for the last four years. You can buy black peppercorns at most large shops, and I hope you have, or can get, a pepper-mill, because freshly ground pepper is as different from commercially

ground pepper as freshly ground coffee from that which has been ground and stored. You can, of course, use ordinary pepper, if there is no help for it, but try to grind your own.

Another very good thing for a solitary lunch is a Raw Vegetable Salad. This is good in the winter, when lettuce and other salad vegetables are hard to come by. For one, take:

- 1 small carrot
- 2 Jerusalem artichokes
- a slice of swede, or a small turnip
- a small onion, finely chopped
- a few brussels sprouts, or a leaf or two of cabbage

Scrub the carrot and turnip or swede well, and scrape the carrot until the red appears. Hold it in your left hand and scrape downwards, on to a piece of paper. Peel off the tough outside skin from the turnip or swede, put the carrot and the turnip into a bowl of cold water to freshen while you prepare the other vegetables. Wash the artichokes, and the sprouts and cabbage, in cold water. Pick off any withered leaves from the sprouts. Put sprouts or cabbage into the bowl with the roots. Now scrape your artichokes until they are white all over and put them in cold water. All this sounds laborious, but it does not take long. Leave the vegetables in soak while you make your salad dressing—a different one, this time:

SALAD DRESSING No. 2

- 2 saltspoonfuls of salt
 - 1 saltspoonful of freshly ground black pepper
 - 1 small teaspoonful of French Mustard
 - 1 dessertspoonful of vinegar
 - 4 dessertspoonfuls of sweetened condensed milk.
- Nestles' for preference.

Put salt, pepper, mustard and condensed milk into a large cup and stir them thoroughly together. Add the vinegar a

little at a time—you may like a little more than a dessert-spoonful, this is a matter of taste. Stir until the dressing is the consistency of thick cream.

Now take your grater and grate your vegetables separately into a basin, or, in separate heaps on to a large plate. Grate the artichoke last, because it turns dark in colour, if you leave it without salad dressing for more than a minute or two. It is quite harmless, but it does not look nice. Shred the green vegetables roughly with your kitchen knife, and put a little heap of chopped onion in the middle of the dish or plate. To chop the onion, take off the outside skin, hold the onion in the left hand. With the kitchen knife in the right hand, cut down almost to the bottom of the onion cutting across it in one direction. Then turn it on its side and cut it down again, and it will fall into little pieces. You can chop these smaller still, if you like. Put your salad dressing on one side of your plate and dip the vegetables in it as you eat them. Chopped herbs go well with this dish, but they can't be had in winter, unless you choose to eat your raw vegetables in early spring, you will have to do without them. I use a little chopped parsley myself, you can get that all the year round.

Once you get to like raw vegetables (which you will do, in all probability, if you can forget that they are very good for you) there are several variations that follow this Raw Salad recipe through the seasons. Raw cauliflower, the flowery part only, grates very well, and tastes delicious. Brussels sprouts can be grated or shredded. The white heart of a cabbage, roughly or finely shredded, and mixed with a stick of celery, makes a wonderful salad. Red and white cabbage, mixed together, also with a little celery, look attractive and taste good. Raw mushrooms, broken with the fingers, taste wonderful. So do raw green peas. I say nothing of raw green peppers, at the moment, but when they do show themselves

again, add them to your salad, and crunch them up as they are, or shred them over the top of your salad.

Another very good dressing, particularly good with Cole Slaw, or cabbage salad, is made with:

the juice of $\frac{1}{2}$ a lemon

4 dessertspoonfuls of cream, or top milk

3 saltspoonfuls of salt

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ saltspoonfuls of pepper

Put salt and pepper into a cup, add lemon juice, then cream and beat together. If it is absolutely necessary, you can make this dressing with a teaspoonful of lemon substitute and two dessertspoonfuls of water. How glad we shall all be when substitutes disappear for ever!

VEGETABLE DISHES

Vegetable dishes are very good for lunching at home, and here is the place to tell you of what I consider to be a good way, and an easy way, to cook vegetables. Throw away all the accepted ideas of using saucepanfuls of salted water, and cooking vegetables until they are steeped and sodden in water. Put your vegetables in with only a tablespoonful or two of water, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful of salt, and cook them never for more than twenty minutes, often for much less than that. You will then have crisp, delicious vegetables, with all their vitamins intact, tasting good, and giving you very little trouble. Here is a list, which tells you how long to cook all the vegetables you are likely to use:

CABBAGE—very good this way*—so try it once, and see how you like it. Wash in cold water, take off withered leaves, cut in half, then shred roughly with a kitchen knife and put into a saucepan with one tablespoonful of water, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful of salt—no more—and put over a hot flame with a knob of margarine. Stir over great heat for a minute or two, until

the juice from the cabbage runs out, stir well, then lower the heat and cook for 10 minutes. Put on to a hot plate, with the juice, add a little pepper, and eat hot.

CAULIFLOWER.—Wash in cold water, cut the flower from the stalk, and break it up into small pieces. Take only the small green leaves from just round the flower. Put into a saucepan with a knob of margarine and 2 tablespoonfuls of water, cook over strong heat until there is a little juice in the pan, then stir well, reduce the heat and cook for 15 minutes. Shake the pan from time to time, so that the cauliflower does not stick and burn. You will find that the flower is soft enough to eat, but still crisp and tasting fresh. Eat with the juice, or, if you want to make a sauce to go with it, strain off the juice and make it up to $\frac{1}{2}$ pint with milk. Directions for making the sauce will be found in Chapter Six.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS.—Wash in cold water, trim off outside leaves, put into a pan with 2 tablespoonfuls of water and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful of salt and a knob of margarine and cook over strong heat until the juice flows out. If the sprouts are large, cut the stalk down for $\frac{1}{4}$ inch with a sharp knife. This helps the juice to come out. Cook for 15 minutes, which is enough for small and medium-sized sprouts. Very large sprouts may take 20 minutes.

SPROUTING BROCCOLI.—Wash in cold water, peel the stalks, taking away the tough outsides, put in with $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful of salt and a knob of margarine and 2 tablespoonfuls of water, cook for 10 minutes, after reducing the heat.

SCARLET RUNNERS.—Wash, take off the stringy parts by cutting off the top and pulling off the string that adheres to it, then cutting the other end and pulling that too. Break into two or three pieces, or cut in diamond shaped bits,

put on with a teaspoonful of salt and a knob of margarine and $\frac{1}{2}$ a teacupful of water, cook for 10 minutes after reducing heat.

FRENCH BEANS.—New and fresh—may be left whole, if they are small, cooked with $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful of salt and a knob of margarine for 10 minutes after reducing heat.

LEEKs.—Wash very well, they are often sandy. Cut in rings about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long, leave on some of the green part. Put on with $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful of salt and a knob of margarine and 1–2 tablespoonfuls of water, cook 5–10 minutes. Good with Cheese Sauce.

GREEN PEAS.—Shell, put on with a teaspoonful of sugar and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful of salt and a sprig of fresh mint, some lettuce leaves and $\frac{1}{2}$ a teacupful of water, as well as a knob of margarine. Cook over a gentle heat for 15 minutes for new garden peas. Field peas which look yellow, and are liable to be dry, may take longer—say 20 minutes.

VEGETABLE MARROW.—Peel, take away the seeds, cut the marrow in smallish pieces. Put on with $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful, of salt and a knob of margarine. Cook 10 minutes after reducing heat.

The amount of margarine has been left rather vague. The right amount is 1 oz. for every pound of vegetables. You may often cook less than a pound, after the preparation has been done. And at the moment, you may find it hard to spare as much as an ounce from your ration. Put in as much as you can, and don't forget the strong heat at first—this is important, so is the small amount of salt. If you use less margarine, add a little more water. On no account throw away the liquid that comes from the vegetables. Either eat it, or strain it off and make a sauce with it to go with the dish. If there is too much for you to eat with the dish, and there may

be from leeks, marrow or cabbage, put in to your refrigerator and use as a vegetable stock, for sauce, soup, or gravy. It is too precious to be wasted, from the health standpoint, and it tastes delicious. Vegetable Stock should not be kept for more than two days, however, it goes sour.

Here are some elaborated vegetable dishes.

CAULIFLOWER AU GRATIN.—Enough for two:

- 1 cauliflower
- 2 ozs. margarine
- 2 dessertspoonfuls flour
- 4 dessertspoonfuls grated cheese
- salt and pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of liquid from the cauliflower, and milk
- a few crumbs

Cook the cauliflower as described above, strain off the liquid and make it up to $\frac{1}{2}$ pint with milk. Make the sauce as described in Chapter Six, add the grated cheese, keeping back a teaspoonful of cheese. Pour the sauce over the cauliflower, dished on a plate, scatter the cheese and a few crumbs over the top, and put under a hot grill for a minute or two. When the cheese has melted and become golden brown, serve very hot, with brown bread and butter. I have said that this is enough for two, but there is no reason why you should not eat it all yourself, if you are sufficiently hungry.

SCALLOPED POTATOES.—For one

- 2 good sized potatoes
- 1 onion, chopped or sliced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pint milk
- 4 dessertspoonfuls grated cheese
- 1 oz. margarine
- salt and pepper
- a little grated nutmeg, if you like it

Scrub and peel the potatoes, peel and slice or chop the onion. Put potato and onion into a pie-dish in layers, sprinkling each layer very lightly with salt, pepper and grated nutmeg (optional), and a little grated cheese. Pour in the milk, dot with margarine, and bake for an hour in a moderate oven (Reg. Mark 6 or 350°).

CORN ON THE COB

This is, above all, a suitable vegetable for solitary feeders—in fact, many are too sensitive to put their elbows on the table and enjoy it in company. Here is a good way to cook and serve it:

Take off the leaves and the silky fibre and drop the cobs into a pan of cold water. Add a teaspoonful of salt and bring the water to the boil. As soon as the water boils, take out the corn, drain it well, and put into a hot dish, or on to a hot plate. Take as much butter as you can spare and smear it over the cob. Mix a little salt and pepper on your plate, dip the cob in this and gnaw off the corn holding the cob in both hands. I have not mentioned the amount of corn—it varies according to appetite. My friend Constance Spry once ate seven cobs in my presence. Most people will be satisfied with two. (In her defence, I should say that Constance had been gardening all the morning, and when she gardens, she gardens. None of that stuff with a decorated apron and a pair of wash-leather gloves for her.) This method of cooking corn comes from a writer in Los Angeles—and is the best there is. Most books tell you to cook it 20 minutes in boiling water. Try this way, and you will find it better.

BAKED VEGETABLE MARROW

This is a good way to cook that rather insipid vegetable, which is only really good when it is so young that it seems inhuman to cut it. You need:

1 very small marrow, or half a medium sized one, or a thick slice from a large one.

salt and pepper and grated nutmeg

sugar

2 squares of margarine about the size of lumps of sugar.

Peel the marrow and take away the seeds. Cut the pulp in small pieces and put a layer of them in a small pie-dish. Sprinkle very lightly with salt, freshly ground pepper, sugar and grated nutmeg, and dot with tiny pieces of margarine. Put in another layer of pulp, sprinkle and dot afresh, and go on at this game until all the marrow, etc., are used up. Put into a moderate oven (Regulo Mark 6 or 350°) for an hour. This is refreshing eaten with brown bread and butter, and, if you are hungry with a piece of cheese.

American Squash can be cooked in the same way.

BAKED MUSHROOMS

6 mushrooms

salt and pepper

1 oz. margarine or butter

Wipe the mushrooms with a clean damp cloth—it is not necessary to peel them. Take off the stalks, which can be cooked with the mushrooms. Put them, face downwards, in a pie-dish or a deep plate, and sprinkle each one lightly with salt and freshly ground pepper. Put a piece of margarine or butter on each. Cover with another plate, or with a smaller pie-dish, and put into a moderate oven (Regulo Mark 6 or 350°) for 45–60 minutes. For lunch, eat with a couple of rashers of grilled bacon and some toast.

STUFFED TOMATOES

1 large, or 2 smaller tomatoes

1 rasher of bacon

- 1 spring onion, chopped
- 4 dessertspoonfuls of breadcrumbs
- salt and pepper
- 1 dessertspoonful of grated cheese

Take a sharp knife and with it cut off the top of the tomato. Scoop out some of the pulp from the inside with a teaspoon and put it in a cup. Cut off the rind and the rust from the bacon, cut it in small pieces and fry in a frying-pan until brown and crisp. Add to it the chopped spring onion, the breadcrumbs, and some pepper and very little salt. Cook all together until the onion is soft, then mix in the tomato pulp. Put the mixture into the hollowed-out tomato with a teaspoon, and scatter the grated cheese over the top. Put into a hot oven for 10 minutes (Regulo Mark 7 or 450°) or cook under the grill for 10-12 minutes, or until the tomato is soft. Eat with brown bread and butter or toast.

Note:—to measure an ounce of margarine or butter, take as much as will fill a tablespoon flat—or 2 dessertspoonfuls. Or, if you have a half-pound pat of margarine, divide it in two, theoretically, by marking down the middle with a knife—this gives you 4 ounces. Divide the 4 ounces in the same way—2 ounces—half this amount is 1 ounce. When you have become accustomed to the look of an ounce of margarine, you will no longer need to go through this process.

MACARONI CHEESE

Here is a quick way to make Macaroni Cheese—you can find the usual recipes in any cookery book, so there is no need to repeat them here.

For one:

- 2 ozs. macaroni—or $\frac{1}{2}$ teacupful
- 1 quart of water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful of salt

- 1 teacupful of milk—or of brown gravy
- 4 dessertspoonfuls of grated cheese
- salt, pepper and cayenne

Put the quart of water and the $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt into a saucepan and bring the water to the boil. Sprinkle in the macaroni and boil fast for 15 minutes; take out a piece and try it between the teeth—if it is soft all through, pour off the water and drain the macaroni. Put it into a dish, cover with grated cheese, season with salt, pepper and a spot of cayenne, pour into the dish any cold gravy you may have left over, or a teacupful of hot milk. Put under the grill until the cheese is brown. If you make this dish with gravy, it is a good plan to add to it 2 or more dessertspoonfuls of chopped onion, browned in a little hot margarine.

A RICE DISH.—Obligingly called Risotto by my friends, who are very fond of it. Enough for two:

- 8 dessertspoonfuls of rice
- 1 onion
- 2-3 tomatoes
- 1 teacupful of hot stock
- 4 heaped dessertspoonfuls of grated cheese
- salt and pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful of Worcester Sauce
- 1 oz. margarine

Put the rice in a gravy strainer and wash it well under the cold water tap. Peel and chop the onion, grate the cheese, skin the tomatoes (see Chapter Five for directions on doing this) and make the stock with a small teaspoonful of vegetable extract (Marmite or something similar) and hot, nearly boiling water. Melt the margarine in a saucepan, put in the onion and cook until soft, but not brown, then add the sliced tomatoes and cook them until soft. Shake in the rice and cook it until it has

soaked up all the margarine. Then pour in the stock, and stand over the pan until the rice has soaked up all the stock and begun to turn soft. At this stage, put the saucepan into the oven (Regulo Mark 5, or 250°) and leave it there for half an hour to three quarters. By that time the rice will be cooked and dry. Stir in the cheese, salt and pepper and Worcester Sauce and serve in a hot dish.

My friend Basil Dearden who likes this dish very much, tells me that it is very good eaten cold—and indeed, I have seen him eat quite large quantities of it in the kitchen, when he has come in too late for supper. I find it, cold, rather too greasy to be enjoyable, but others may share Basil's taste.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BIG MEAL OF THE DAY

IN all probability, the solitary feeder will take this meal in a restaurant. But now and again, on a Sunday, say, it may be pleasant to eat it at home, and having gone so far along the cookery path, you may as well learn how to cook a small amount of meat, fish or fowl, and how to make a simple soup, or plain pudding.

Dinners begin with soup, so we will take that first. Meat soups come out of a can, for solitaries, but vegetable soup is so easy to make, and so good, on a cold night, that you should have a standard recipe, made of materials that you are sure to have in the house. I agree heartily with Constance Spry and Ambrose Heath, both of whom have deprecated in print the use of meat stock for vegetable soup. Vegetable soup needs water, and nothing else, as a foundation—a little milk can be added, but no meat flavour, which, all three of us think, spoils the delicate taste of the vegetables. For one take:

1 good half pint of water

1 potato

1 small onion

salt and pepper

chopped parsley

$\frac{1}{2}$ teacupful of milk

$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce of margarine (for measuring margarine, see Chapter Three).

Peel the potato and cut it up roughly. Peel and slice the onion. Melt the margarine in a saucepan and make it hot. Put in the prepared vegetables, cover the pan, and leave it over a low heat for at least 10 minutes. 15 or 20 is a better time to allow, but if you are hungry, 10 will do. Shake the pan

from time to time, and boil a kettle while the onion and potato are "sweating" (this is the inelegant cooking term) in the fat. Measure out $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of hot water and pour it into the pan. Leave the vegetables to cook, still over a low heat, while you are laying the table, then add the milk, the salt and the pepper, heat again to boiling point, and then you can pour your soup into a cup and sprinkle it with the chopped parsley and eat it.

A leek instead of an onion makes this Leek and Potato Soup, or, if you want to be cosmopolitan, Potage Poireaux et Pommes. With a grated carrot instead of a potato it becomes Carrot Soup, and should then be thickened with a table-spoonful of rice, put in with the hot water and cooked 20 minutes. With three stalks of celery, it is Celery Soup, and in that case the potato can be left in for a thickener. With three or four artichokes instead of the potato, it is Artichoke Soup, and this should be thickened with flour and margarine, made into a *roux*—a difficult word to translate. It means, in this case, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of margarine melted in a saucepan, 1 dessert-spoonful of flour stirred into it and cooked. $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of milk and vegetable water mixed (that is, the liquid in which the artichokes and so on were cooked) stirred into this mixture—off the heat—the whole thing brought to the boil and cooked over a lower heat for 3 minutes. This, by the way, is the foundation method for making white sauce—but for a sauce to cover fish or vegetables you use 1 oz. margarine, 2 dessert-spoonfuls of flour and $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of liquid.

NEXT COMES FISH

Already in the chapter on breakfast you have learned some ways to deal with salt and smoked fish. White fish, i.e. fresh haddock, hake, sole, plaice or halibut, can all be cooked easily, and deliciously, like this:

BAKED FISH

- $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. white fish
- 3 sprigs of parsley
- a small onion—a spring onion will do
- 2 sprigs of mint or tarragon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ glass of white wine, or cider
- salt and pepper

Wash the fish in cold water and leave it to drain. Chop the onion, parsley and mint or tarragon, grate the rind from the lemon and squeeze out the juice. Take the paper from a pat of butter or margarine and rub the paper over a pie-dish, or fire-proof dish. Scatter the onion, lemon rind and half the herbs over the bottom of the dish and lay the fish on top of them. Season with lemon juice, and a little salt and pepper, scatter the rest of the herbs on top, and pour the wine over the fish. (I know wine is worth its weight in gold at this moment, but wine or cider is almost indispensable in this dish, so wait for it until we get wine in the shops again.) Put the dish into a slow oven (Regulo Mark 4 or 300°) and cook until the fish is opaque and comes easily away from the bone when you push it gently with a fork. Take the dish out of the oven and carefully drain off the liquor—there will be several tablespoonfuls from the fish. Make up to $\frac{1}{4}$ pint with milk, and make a sauce with 1 flat dessertspoonful of flour, a piece of margarine that fills a dessertspoon, fat, and the liquor. Season this sauce very carefully—it may not need any salt or pepper, but a little freshly ground pepper may add to it just the spicy flavour fish needs—and pour it over the fish. Eat out of the dish, with a steamed potato in its jacket. (See Chapter Six for sauce-making.)

GRILLED FISH

Steaks of fish, cod, turbot, or halibut, can be grilled and

served with a flavoured butter. Wash the fish and brush it over with salad oil or melted margarine, make the grill red-hot and cook the fish until brown on one side, then turn with a flat knife or a fish slice and grill the other side. If there is one side with skin, cook that side last. Cream a pat of butter or margarine with salt, pepper, lemon juice and chopped parsley form the pat into a neat shape and put it on the plate, or on top of the fish. This acts instead of a sauce.

FRYING IS NOT ADVISED

You can fry fish in deep or shallow fat, but for solitaires I do not advise it for several reasons. If you have to do your own washing up, greasy pans add a little too much to your task. Also, frying is not a job for an amateur; there are too many rules to follow, and dry frying, as it is misleadingly called, is anything but dry in the finished result, as a rule. For deep frying you need a special saucepan, a wire basket, and a supply of draining paper in order to make a successful dish—probably none of these is in your kitchen. I invite correspondence from anybody who feels that, in spite of all these difficulties, frying is the one thing they feel called upon to do. I will gladly send to any such person the rules and recommendations that are left out here.

NOR BOILING

Boiling for fish I do not advise, either. The result is lacking in flavour, and needs a well flavoured sauce to correct it. If you cannot be bothered to bake your fish, put it between two buttered plates and steam it over a saucepan full of boiling water. It can also be cooked in the flavoured stock known to the French cook as *Court Bouillon*, which is quite easy to make, and adds greatly to flavour.

COURT BOUILLON

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ pints of water
 $\frac{1}{2}$ wineglass of vinegar
1 teaspoonful of salt
6 peppercorns
3 sprigs of parsley
 $\frac{1}{2}$ bayleaf
3 slices of carrot
1 small onion, stuck with 1 clove
salt and pepper

Put all together into a saucepan and bring to the boil. Simmer for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour. Strain, add fish, and simmer gently until the fish is opaque and comes easily away from the bone. This stock can be strained and kept for several cooking operations. Bring to the boil again, adding a teacupful of water, before using again.

For very delicately flavoured fish, such as sole, turbot, or whiting, substitute a small teacupful of milk, for the vinegar.

MEAT

In all probability, you will use your grill more often than your oven for cooking your small amounts of meat. So the grill shall be dealt with first.

GRILLED CHOPS

Wipe the chops with a clean damp cloth. Sprinkle them with flour then with a little salt and pepper. Make the grill red-hot, put the chops into a grill-pan and brown first one side then the other. Turn them between two knives, as the flesh should not be pierced while the chops are cooking. When the chops are brown on both sides, leave for another three minutes for each side to cook. Unless they are very thick, chops, cook under strong heat all the time. If you have a

thick loin chop, turn the heat a little lower to finish cooking. While the chops are grilling, prepare the foundation for your gravy. Put $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of water in a kettle and bring it to the boil. Put a small teaspoonful of meat or vegetable extract in a sauceboat, and pour over it either the hot water, or, if you are cooking potatoes, use hot potato water. Season with a pinch of celery salt, and if you have handy a little tomato paste, or some dehydrated onions or celery, add a pinch of either, or both, to your sauceboat. As soon as the chops are cooked, pour off into a stone jar the hot fat from the pan, leaving just enough to moisten the bottom of the pan. Shake in a half dessertspoonful of flour and make it brown in the hot fat, then pour in the contents of your sauceboat and bring them to the boil. Cook for a minute or two, while you rinse out the sauceboat with hot water, then pour back into the sauceboat and serve. The more odd bits of flavouring you are able to put into your gravy the nicer it will be. If you are in a great hurry, or very lazy, you can just pour some of the hot fat over your chops, but in that case you must eat them very hot or you will be left with a fatty feeling in your mouth.

GRILLED STEAK

Cook in the same way, with the same preparation and make the same gravy. If you like your steak red inside, reduce the time of cooking accordingly. A steak $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick takes five minutes on each side, after browning, if you like it red inside—7–12 minutes if you like it brown all through.

If you have other things to cook and can't attend to the grill all the time, chops can be cooked, and very well cooked, in the oven. Turn on the oven while you are preparing your chop, as for grilling, and when the heat is at 350° , or has been at Regulo Mark 6–7 for 10 minutes, put in your chop. It takes about $\frac{1}{2}$ hour to cook, and should be turned after 15 minutes.

Steak is not so good cooked this way, unless you are one of those who like it well done all through.

PORK CHOPS.—Prepare and cook like mutton chops allowing 8 minutes for each side, after browning. Cook in the oven for $\frac{3}{4}$ hour.

ROASTING.—Now and again, you may cook for two instead of one, or you may have a small joint to deal with. See to your oven, first of all. You need strong heat at first, to seal the outside of the meat. Set your Regulo at 7, or turn your electric stove on full for 20 minutes. Dust your joint with flour, sprinkle it with salt and pepper, and, after 10 minutes, put some dripping into your roasting pan and make it hot in the oven. Put your joint in the pan and pour the hot fat all over it with an iron spoon. Put the pan in the oven and after 10 minutes reduce the heat to medium (electric) you can leave it at Regulo Mark 7 all the time, as this kind of oven regulates itself.

Time: allow 15 minutes to the pound and 15 minutes over, i.e. if your joint weighs 2 lbs. cook for 45 minutes, or 30 minutes plus 15. To tell the weight of your joint, you will have to look at your butcher's bill, if you have no scales. These times apply to beef, mutton and lamb. Pork and veal, take 25–30 minutes to the pound and thirty minutes over. To make gravy, take the meat out of the roasting pan and pour off the fat. Sprinkle the pan with salt ($\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful) and brown the salt over the heat. Pour in hot potato water ($\frac{1}{2}$ pint) and bring to the boil. Add a little pepper, and, if the gravy looks pale, add a spot of vegetable extract.

CHICKEN needs 10 minutes to the pound and 10 minutes over, so a bird of $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. should cook for 35 minutes in a hot oven, (Regulo Mark 7 or 350–400 degrees). Baste well with hot fat every 10 minutes.

Small birds, like partridge, plover, pigeon—cook 20–30 minutes in a hot oven. Only a young pigeon should be roasted, the older birds, owing no doubt to their active life, are tough. Cook them in a casserole for at least an hour, with a rasher or two of bacon, some small onions, one or two tomatoes, a bouquet of herbs and enough stock or water to cover the birds.

DUCK needs more thorough cooking. Allow 20 minutes to the lb. Baste well, and set the Regulo at 7, electric stove at 350–400 degrees.

Remember, when you buy a bird, to ask the weight, until you have experience enough to tell by the look of it how long it will take to cook.

Test a joint, or a bird, before you take it out of the oven like this—push a sharp fork well into a fleshy part and press the meat. If a reddish juice comes out, the meat is not quite ready, and should go back into the oven for 5–10 minutes. If the juice is colourless, the meat is cooked.

VEGETABLES

Notes on the cooking of most vegetables will be found in Chapter Two. This chapter, however, does not deal with potatoes. To boil potatoes, scrub them and boil or steam them in their skins, or, if you can't bear the skins, peel them thinly first. Put them on in cold water, with a teaspoonful of salt, and cook for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour after they come to the boil. Drain off the water (saving enough for gravy) put the potatoes back into the pan, put on the lid, and leave them in a warm place for 5 minutes. This makes them floury. New potatoes are better scraped and cooked in boiling water for 20–30 minutes with a sprig of mint. Drain them, and toss them in a little margarine before serving.

MASHED POTATOES.—If you begin to be an enthusiastic cook, you may want to mash your boiled potatoes. The first thing to remember about this process is that they should be kept hot all the time, or they turn sticky. After draining and setting your potatoes to steam, provide yourself with an ounce or two of margarine and some milk. Mash the potatoes well in the saucepan they cooked in with a potato masher or a large fork, add the margarine a little at a time and beat until your arm aches, then add a spoonful or two of milk at a time and let it get hot in the pan before you beat it in. When the potatoes look white and creamy, taste them, add salt and pepper, as much as they need, and, if you like nutmeg a little grated nutmeg, beat all these in—the more mashed potatoes are beaten the better—and serve heaped up in a hot dish. If you have cold potatoes left over, add them to the hot mash, or mash them by themselves, but in this case, make your milk boiling hot before adding it and be sure the potatoes are really hot before you serve them. This is not the superlative way to mash potatoes—that takes longer, and needs more equipment—but done this way you can get a very nice accompaniment to your meal—perhaps you may find a lump or two, but if the potatoes taste good you may forgive yourself this once.

STEAMED POTATOES, in their skins or peeled, take an hour, over a pan of boiling water. You need a steamer, if you have none put them in a colander and cover them with the saucepan lid. They may take longer this way. They are done when they feel tender.

SIMPLE PUDDINGS

STEWED FRUITS

1 lb. of any fresh fruit
about 4 dessertspoonfuls of sugar

Wash and prepare the fruit, apples need peeling, plums should have their stalks removed, gooseberries need stalks and flowers removed from either end. Put them into a saucepan with only a tablespoonful of water and cook quickly until the juice comes from the fruit, then simmer slowly until the fruit is tender. Add lemon juice to most fruits, and a little grated nutmeg or mixed spice, or cinnamon, if you like spice.

MILK PUDDINGS

1 pint of milk

3 flat dessertspoonfuls rice, sago or tapioca

2 dessertspoonfuls sugar

Put the rice (or whatever it is you use) and the sugar into the bottom of a pie-dish, pour in the milk, stir, and leave to soak for an hour, then put the dish into a very slow oven (Regulo Mark $\frac{1}{2}$ or 250 degrees F.) and cook very slowly for 2-3 hours.

BAKED BATTER PUDDING

8 flat dessertspoonfuls flour

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ pint milk

1 egg—or 2 tablespoonfuls of dried egg reconstituted with 4 tablespoonfuls of water

2 tablespoonfuls cold water

Put the flour and salt into a large bowl, make a small depression in the middle of the flour and break the egg into it. Take a wooden spoon and mix the egg gradually into the flour, don't make any lumps if you can help it, because they will have to be beaten out later. Add the milk, but only half of it at this stage, mixing smoothly all the time. Take an egg-beater, if you have one, a fork if you have not, and beat the batter until it is covered with small bubbles. Then add the rest of the milk and stand the batter aside for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour. Make

some dripping very hot in a baking dish, add the cold water to the batter, then pour it into the dish. Bake $\frac{3}{4}$ hour in a hot oven (Regulo Mark 7 or 400 degrees). Eat hot, with golden syrup or jam, or with butter and sugar.

If eggs are plentiful, you can use 2 eggs for this pudding. Pancakes are made from the same batter, and are not really difficult to make.

You need a small iron frying-pan, and a little pan with some melted lard in it. Pour a spoonful of lard into the pan, and then pour it back into the small pan, leaving just enough fat in the frying-pan to make it shine all over. With a table-spoon pour enough batter into the frying-pan to make a thin cake and cook it on one side. Loosen it from the bottom of the pan with a flat-bladed knife and either toss or turn it over—tossing is really the easier method, if you can nerve yourself to it. Put a sheet of paper on the floor, in case of accidents, see that the pancake is loose from the pan, and jerk it away from you with a sharp movement. It may fall on the floor—never mind, try again. If it does not fall quite straight in the pan, straighten it with your knife and cook the other side. You will soon get the knack of tossing and find it an amusing game. As the pancakes cook, eat them hot, with lemon or orange juice and sugar.

OTHER "AFTERS"

Soon, I hope, we shall be able to get again the French cream cheeses; when we do, any solitary person can make an excellent sweet course with a Petit Suisse, some sugar, and a little fruit—either stewed or fresh. Very good chilled in the refrigerator and eaten cold. Yoghourt is excellent too, but an acquired taste for some people. I eat it myself daily, with brown sugar; it is equally good with salt and freshly ground pepper. Cream cheese with salt and pepper is good also—a

hint to those who have not thought of eating it this way.

FRUITS can be treated in all sorts of ways to make them a simple dessert, here are a few hints:

RIPE APPLES AND PEARS.—Either one, or both together. Cut in thin slices, peel or not, according to the nature of the peel—if this is tough or thick, peel it off, if it is thin, leave it on. Sprinkle with lemon juice and leave to soak in the juice and a little sugar while the rest of your meal is being prepared. The refrigerator is a good place for this soaking to take place, by the way, and the fruit should be covered with juice, or it may turn brown. Eat with cream, cream cheese or ordinary cheese.

BANANAS AND CREAM are too well known to need any description. Remember to pull the strings off the side of the bananas, and try them sometimes with cream cheese or yoghourt.

For a day when you have somebody to dinner, here is a very good way to serve raspberries as a sweet:

For two people:

$\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. raspberries

1 orange

sugar

2 dessertspoonfuls of Cointreau or maraschino

Pick the raspberries over carefully, but do not wash them unless it is necessary, as this takes away some of the flavour from the fruit. Squeeze the juice from the orange and pour it over the fruit, add plenty of sugar, stir lightly, taking care not to bruise the fruit, and put in the refrigerator for at least an hour. Just before serving sprinkle the liqueur over the fruit. Cointreau is much the best liqueur to use for this dish, but if

you have none, use maraschino Grand Marnier or Orange Curacao. Clotted cream goes well with this.

Another fruit dish for two:

4 fresh figs—the little round purple figs that we shall no doubt get again from Italy are excellent for this dish

4 dessertspoonfuls of Cointreau

sugar

a gill of cream

Skin the figs, and break them up with a fork. Mix them with the cream and the sugar, and, again, just before serving, pour a tablespoonful of Cointreau over each serving. These look nice, and are easy to eat, served in a custard or sundae glass.

FRUIT FOOLS are easy to make, and very nice when fresh fruit is about. They can be made with canned fruit also. To my mind, the best way to make a fruit fool is to buy a cream machine and make your own cream from milk and unsalted margarine. With one of these machines in the kitchen, you are never at a loss for a sweet course, and your cream costs about a quarter as much. Mixed with fruit, or used in cooking, this home-made cream is good enough for anybody. A fruit fool for one can be made with $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of any fresh fruit, or half a tin of any tinned fruit. Chop it up, if tinned, or skin it and take away any seeds or stones if fresh. Make cream with 2 ozs. unsalted margarine—it must be unsalted—and $\frac{1}{2}$ teacupful of milk. Melt the margarine in the milk, cool the mixture by pouring it backwards and forwards from the saucepan to a jug. When the mixture is cool enough for you to hold your hand quite comfortably round the saucepan, pour it into your cream machine and pump it through with a quick, hard pressure on the handle, leaning hard on it as you press. The cream should come through thick and smooth. If it runs thin, pour it back into the jug,

beat it well with a fork, and begin again. When all the mixture is through, stir it well, and put it away to get quite cold before you use it. Stir again well before using—you will find that the cream is thicker on top than below, so stir until it is smooth and the same texture all through. Stir the fruit and the cream together, add sugar to taste, and, if you like, and if you have it add again a few drops of any liqueur. A pinch of cinnamon, or grated nutmeg goes well with almost all fruits, too. With a very acid fruit, like rhubarb or gooseberries, add a good pinch of powdered ginger as well. By the way, gooseberries and rhubarb should be stewed before you make them into fools. Strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, plums, especially Victoria plums, can all be used raw. Tinned apricots or peaches are very good for a fool, and so are a couple of bananas, mashed with a fork, and well sweetened.

CHAPTER FIVE

VISITORS FOR TEA

I HAVE no illusions about my readers, I know they won't take the trouble to make little cakes for themselves in the afternoon, even when they are at home to do so, but perhaps on those special occasions when a bachelor entertains somebody to tea, he or she will be willing to take a little extra trouble to prepare a nice meal. I don't suggest that you should make cakes—they can be bought at a good baker's. But you will want sandwiches, and perhaps toast, or muffins, or crumpets, or tea-cakes, and perhaps a few extras to make a good impression on your guest or guests.

SANDWICHES.—Be careful about these. All too often tea-party sandwiches shed their middles at the first bite, and few situations are more embarrassing. The only filling that I advise in this mortifying condition is cucumber, and that only because there is no better way to serve it. But tomatoes, sardines, ham, any mixture in fact that usually goes into a sandwich in a hard, uncompromising state, should, I think, be dealt with first as follows:

TOMATOES.—Pour boiling water over, drain, pour cold water over, and peel off the skins. Put through a sieve if you have one, if you have none, mash the tomatoes in a basin, add salt and pepper, and then cream the mush with the butter or margarine you are going to spread on the sandwiches. This is, in fact, the whole secret of making sandwiches that will bring a blush to nobody's cheek—combine the filling with the spread, and then spread thickly. Flavour your tomato sandwiches with chopped basil, if you can grow any, or get

any from a gardener friend. If basil is out of the question, chopped fresh mint will have to do. Taste this mixture, and all your mixtures before you spread them.

EGG AND CRESS.—Hard boil your eggs, and have them cold. (See Chapter Three for directions on hard-boiling.) Cut them round with a knife and take out the yolks. Chop the white finely, and press the yolk through a wire gravy strainer. Cream the yolk and the chopped white with your spread, season well with salt and pepper, and use your cress *well chopped*, so that it causes heart-burning to nobody. Spread the egg mixture on one side of your sandwich, lay the chopped cress on top and cover with the second slice.

CREAM CHEESE AND OLIVE.—Half a cream cheese will make quite a lot of sandwiches. Cream it thoroughly with a pat of margarine, add half a dozen Spanish olives, cut from their stones and chopped roughly—you do not want them too small—or too finely chopped. Mix cream, margarine, and olive together, season them with a little lemon juice and salt, freshly ground black pepper and a spot of cayenne. Let the mixture get firm in the refrigerator before you spread your sandwiches.

CELERY AND WALNUTS.—This can be made with shelled walnuts, but it is incomparably better if you take the trouble to shell and skin fresh walnuts—about $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. will be enough. Take also the white inside sticks of celery and chop them finely. Break the walnuts into little pieces, mix them with the celery, and blend both into some thick home-made cream (made as described in the preceding chapter) well seasoned with salt, pepper and a touch of cayenne. Put bunches of watercress on the plate to be eaten with these.

GREEN MIXTURE.—4 spring onions, cut finely, with the green ends included, a few sprigs of parsley, chopped roughly, a teaspoonful of lemon juice, all creamed with an ounce of margarine and seasoned with salt and pepper. Put a spring onion on this plate, to warn those who dare not eat an onion—what they miss!

HAM.—If you feel you must have ham, treat it like this: Mince it finely with a sharp kitchen knife, including a little of the fat. Chop up a tablespoonful of mustard pickles and mix ham and pickles with your margarine to make a spread. Season with a drop of two of Worcester Sauce, or Escoffier's Sauce Robert.

TOASTS.—You know about toast already from Chapter Two. Muffins and crumpets are toasted like bread. They should be done very brown, well buttered, and put in a warm place so that they are buttery all through. Put salt and pepper on the tray for those who want them. For a family party, or among old friends, dripping toast is good, especially if you have any beef dripping, or duck dripping. Salt and pepper it well, and eat it with radishes, lettuce or watercress.

MARMALADE ROLLS.—These are delicious, and are stolen shamelessly from Constance Spry, who is better at things for tea than anyone I know. Cut bread and butter in thin slices, spread them thinly with marmalade, roll them up carefully and put them into a hot oven for 5 minutes. They come out brown and crackly and taste wonderful.

SAVOURY ROLLS.—If you like these, you may like to try spreading bloater paste, or kipper or anchovy paste on bread and butter and baking it brown in the same way. Good for those without a sweet tooth. Oven in both cases should be at Regulo Mark 7-8, or 450-500 F.

ASPARAGUS ROLLS are good too. Roll thin slices of brown bread and butter round tinned asparagus tips, first dipping the tips in salad dressing (see Chapter Three). This idea is also borrowed from Constance Spry, and many a roll have I eaten at her tea-table. I have noticed often that, whatever is left on the table, the plate with Asparagus Rolls is always empty.

Other good things to add to your tea-table are dishes of watercress, (well washed, and with every sprig picked over) radishes, (also well washed, and with the root ends clipped off with the kitchen scissors, and only a small leaf or two left on at the other end), lettuce, cos or round, washed and cut in halves, and even shrimps, but then you must have finger bowls, or your guests and you will get fishy. Celery, scrubbed with a stiff brush, and with the top ends of the stalks cut down so that they curl back in water, is good, and should be served in a tall glass with some water in it, to keep it crisp. Leave some of the green on too, it looks pretty.

RUSSIAN TEA.—You know about making tea from the breakfast chapter, but that does not include Russian Tea, which is made like this:

Use China tea, if you can get it, and do not make it too strong, because Russians drink it without milk. Strain it into a glass, or a heated cup, add a slice of lemon, and serve sugar with it. Some take a lot of sugar with this kind of tea, and if by any chance you are entertaining anybody from the U.S.S.R. give them some jam and a spoon, and watch them stir a large spoonful of jam into their lemon-scented tea, stir it up, and drink it off. Raspberry or blackcurrant jam, I am told by my good friend Danischewsky, are well thought of to go with this exotic drink.

CHAPTER SIX

SAUCES AND EXTRAS

SIMPLE SAUCES

I repeat the process of sauce making here, in case you did not read the book all through—a horrible supposition.

PLAIN WHITE SAUCE

1 oz. margarine

$\frac{1}{2}$ pint milk, or milk and vegetable liquor

2 dessertspoonfuls flour, heaped

salt and pepper

a squeeze of lemon juice, or a teaspoonful of lemon substitute

Melt the margarine in a small pan, add the flour and cook until the mixture bubbles. Draw the pan off the heat and add the liquid, a little at a time, stirring all the time. When all the liquid is in, put the pan back over the heat and whip the sauce until it boils with a small wire whisk or a fork. When it comes to the boil, reduce the heat and cook for another 2-3 minutes. If you have fancy ideas about your cooking, you can add greatly to the flavour and appearance of your sauce by beating in, at this stage, a speck or two of butter, adding a spoonful of cream, and beating in a squeeze of lemon juice or substitute (how glad I shall be when there is no longer any need to talk about substitutes). Taste, and season with salt and pepper. If the sauce is too thick, beat in a little more milk. If it is not thick enough, work together a small piece of margarine and a teaspoonful of flour and beat into the mixture, a little at a time. Cook three minutes after this addition, so that this flour is well cooked. Otherwise your sauce may taste pasty.

PARSLEY SAUCE is the same sauce, with a tablespoonful of chopped parsley added at the end.

CELERY SAUCE.—Make like white sauce, but simmer a stalk of celery in the milk first, and strain off before adding the liquid. You can put back the stewed celery into the sauce, if you like.

ONION SAUCE.—Peel and cut up a small onion and simmer in $\frac{1}{2}$ pint milk. Strain off, and use the flavoured milk for the sauce. Add the cooked onion to the sauce.

CAPER SAUCE.—If you serve this with Boiled Mutton, use half mutton liquor and half milk for the sauce. Add a tablespoonful of chopped capers and a teaspoonful of vinegar from the bottle. Make like white sauce.

DUTCH SAUCE.—Make like white sauce. Add an egg, beaten with a spoonful of hot sauce, at the end, but do not allow the sauce to boil after the egg is in, or it will curdle. You can use a dried reconstituted egg for this, if it is absolutely necessary. Very good with fish, or with white vegetables like celery or artichokes.

EGG SAUCE.—Add 1 hard-boiled egg, cut in small pieces. A good way to use up an egg left over from breakfast. Serve with fish or boiled chicken.

CHEESE SAUCE.—Add 4 dessertspoonfuls grated cheese after the sauce has boiled, and do not reboil. Season with a touch of cayenne pepper. Serve with Cauliflower, leeks, or macaroni au gratin.

TOMATO SAUCE

$\frac{1}{2}$ lb. tomatoes
2 sprigs of parsley
2 sprigs of thyme
a clove of garlic

a small onion

$\frac{1}{2}$ oz. margarine

Take off the stalk of the tomatoes and pour boiling water over them. Leave them for 2 minutes, drain off the water, soak them for a minute in cold water and then take off their skins. Cut them in quarters and put them into a saucepan with the parsley, thyme, chopped onion, and garlic, also chopped. Add the margarine and cook fast for 5 minutes. Then put the cover on the pan and let the sauce cook gently for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour. The sauce should then be put through a sieve, but if, as I suppose, you have no such thing, mash it up well with a fork and add salt and pepper to your taste.

APPLE SAUCE

1 large cooking apple

$\frac{1}{2}$ oz. margarine

4-6 dessertspoonfuls sugar

juice of $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon, or 1 teaspoonful lemon substitute

Peel, core and slice the apple. Put it into a saucepan with the margarine and the sugar and the lemon juice or substitute. Cook over strong heat until the juice has flowed from the apple, then reduce the heat and simmer very gently until the fruit has been reduced to a mash. Beat well with a fork and serve hot or cold, with roast duck, grilled chops, or anything else you fancy. If you have any left over, eat it for breakfast, it is most refreshing in the early morning.

BREAD SAUCE

2 thick slices of bread

$\frac{1}{2}$ pint of milk

1 small onion, stuck with 1 clove

blade of mace

salt and pepper

small piece of margarine

Peel the onion and put it into the milk, with the clove stuck into it, and with a blade of mace. Simmer very gently for 20 minutes. In the meantime, crumble the bread, or if it is very stale, grate it into crumbs. Put the crumbs into a basin and strain the hot milk over them. Cover and leave to soak for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ hour—more if possible. Reheat, but do not allow the sauce to boil, or the bread will become sticky. Add the margarine and season with salt and pepper. Serve with chicken, duck, grilled chops or steak.

ODD BITS AND PIECES TO SERVE WITH DRINKS

Radishes, watercress, and celery come in again here. Also squares of Cheddar or Cheshire cheese, neatly arranged on a plate, with a dish of cheese crackers beside them. Salted nuts of all kinds—you can make salted almonds yourself like this. If the nuts are still in their skins, put them on in a saucepan, cover with cold water and bring them to the boil. Drain them, and rub off the skins in a clean tea towel. They come off quite easily. Pour a tablespoonful of salad oil into a frying-pan and make it hot. Put in the nuts and cook them gently until they are a very light brown—remembering that all fried things look a shade or two darker when they cool off. Have a sheet of kitchen paper handy, and put on it 2 tablespoonfuls of salt and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful of cayenne pepper. Shake the nuts, while they are still hot and moist from frying, in this paper so that they are salted all over. Leave them on the paper until they are cool and then shake off some of the salt and serve them in a small dish.

Green tomatoes, pickled in dill, can be bought in most large shops. They are good with drinks, cut in slices, and arranged on a plate. So are pickled cucumbers, also easy to buy; cut them in thick slices and put them back into the shape of a whole cucumber on a long dish. It may sound like wishful

thinking to talk about avocados at the moment, but as soon as they appear again, there is a wonderful dish called *Guacamole* that is good with all drinks. Peel the avocado and take out the stone. Mash it up with a fork, and beat into it a teaspoonful of finely chopped onion, salt and pepper, lemon juice and a couple of tablespoonfuls of sour cream. Beat all together and arrange the result in a small dish, in a heap, with some potato chips in another dish beside it. The idea is to take up the cream on a potato chip out of the bowl, and you will find many people do it over and over again. Petit suisse beaten up with chopped pimento (out of a tin) and chopped olives gives you a pink cream to go with this green Guacamole, and tastes nearly as good.

CARROT STICKS are good with drinks too. You need to wash and scrape your carrot, and then to cut it down in quarters to begin with. Divide each quarter into strips about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, and square them off neatly. Put these strips into a cup of cold water, and chill them well in the refrigerator. They should be crisp and very cold. A wooden salad bowl, filled with ice cubes from the refrigerator, with carrot sticks, radishes, celery, spring onions and small leaves from the heart of a lettuce looks well and tastes well with drinks.

POTTED SHRIMPS are superlative with drinks, so are small rolls of Smoked Salmon. Fingers of toast might well be served with these. And if you want to make a lasting impression as a cook, you could even prepare some toasts all by yourself, and refer to them casually as *Canapés*. One or two spreads will make quite a lot of canapés, and for them you can use some of your sandwich spreads, the ham spread, for example, and the green mixture both taste good this way. Another good one is made with a small tin of

sardines, mashed up in a cup with the juice of a lemon, a teaspoonful of Worcester Sauce, a little salt and a lot of cayenne. Make hot toast, or toast a cheese biscuit and spread the sardine mixture on rather thickly. Another good one is made with half a jar of good bloater paste, creamed with a nut of margarine, seasoned with lemon juice and cayenne and spread on cheese crackers, previously made hot under the grill. Or 2 tablespoonfuls of grated horseradish (which you can get in bottles) mixed with an ounce of margarine, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful of Worcester Sauce, 1 teaspoonful of vinegar (put in last) and a tablespoonful of thick home-made cream. The reason for putting the vinegar in last is that if you add it to the horseradish before the other things have gone in, the mixture may become bitter.

My old and valued friend Angus MacPhail prefers raw tomatoes with his drinks to anything else, but this is something of an idiosyncrasy. In tomato time, you might serve a few, all the same. I remember seeing on Lady Mendl's table, in Beverly Hills, a huge bowl, filled with cracked ice, on which rested radishes, lettuce, spring onions, green peppers, small tomatoes, green and black olives, raw mushrooms and other garden produce, so Angus has his followers. If you give a party of any size for drinks, you may like to try a salad bowl with some green stuff. I recommend ice cubes in it; when rooms get hot, green stuff is apt to wilt unless it is kept cool.

My possible readers have, I find, inspired me with a motherly regard, and I am sorry to take leave of them now. I hope these few pages will not result in too many burned fingers, burnt offerings, and bloody sacrifices, but that some of you, dear readers, will succeed, after long practice in boiling your breakfast eggs better than you now do. I won't hope for more than that.

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